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GENITIVE IN TAMIL

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Genitives modify a noun or noun phrase in an endocentric construction. Tolka:ppiyar, the author of Tolka:ppiyam-has treated genitive under ve :RRumai (case). But Pa : ṇini does not include genitive under karakas. Case grammarians also do not accept genitive as a case. According to them case is a relation that exists between NP and VP. In the case of genitive contruction the relation is that of a NP with another NP. i. e:, attributive noun with the attributed noun.

The following are the four possible ways of expressing the genitive relation of the possessor with the possessed in Tamil. All the phrases mean 'his pen'.

1. avaṉuṭaiya peṉaa
2. avaṉukkuḷḷa peṉaa
3. avaṉatu peṉaa
4. avaṉ peṉaa

All these possessive case phrases can be derived from sentences with 'be' verbs. The genitive case postpositions *uṭaiya* and *uḷḷa* are the relativized forms of the 'be' verbs *uṭaittu* and *uṇṭu* (uḷntu>uṇṭu) respectively. *uṭaittu*, though not used as a 'be' verb in the present day Tamil, was used as a 'be' verb in the classical Tamil. For example,

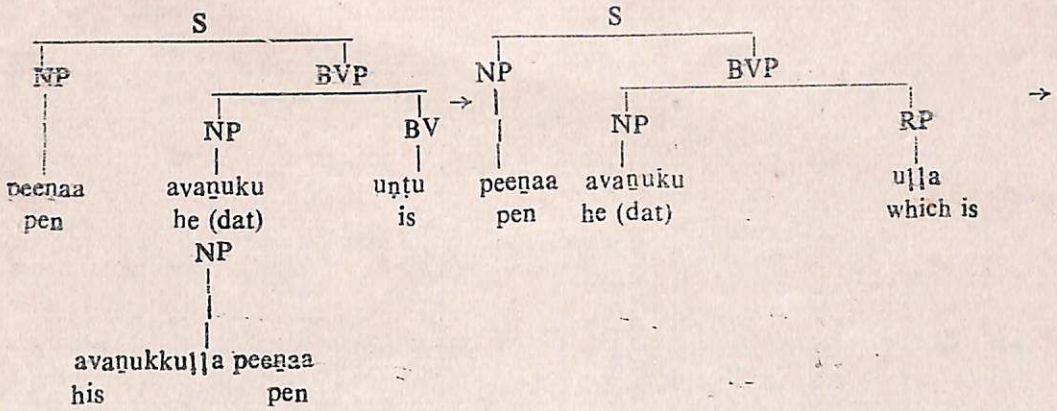
5. coola naaṭu cooRuṭaittu; paaṇṭi naaṭu muttuṭaittu; ceera naaṭu kaḷiRuṭaittu 'The Chola kingdom has rice; the Pandiya kingdom has pearls; the Chera kingdom has elephants'

The possessive phrases *avaṉukkuḷḷa peṉaa* and *avaṉuṭaiya peṉaa* 'his pen' can be derived from the underlying sentences :

6. avaṉukku peṉaa uṇṭu 'He has a pen'
   he(dat) pen is
7. *avaṉ peṉaa uṭaittu 'He has a pen'
   he pen has

The relativization can be roughly represented as follows.

I.



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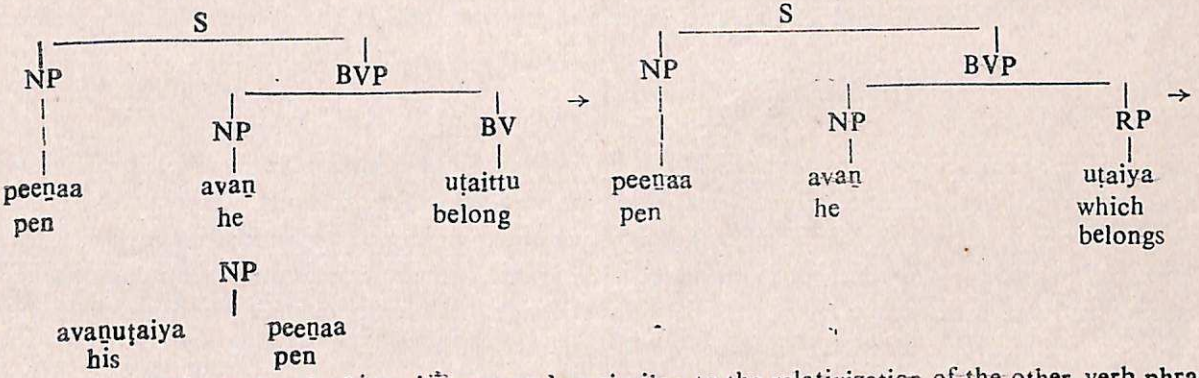


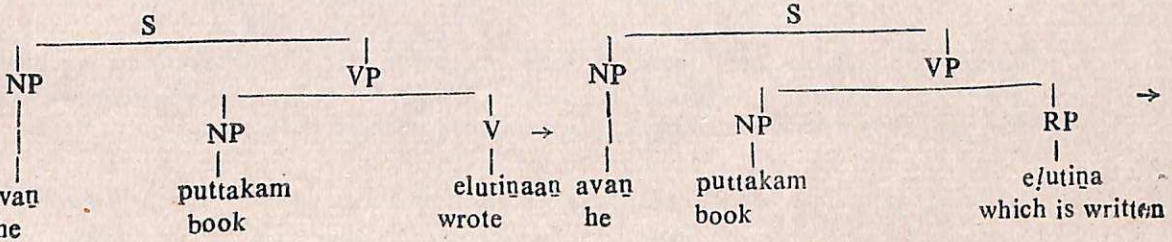
The relativization of the 'be' verb phrase is more or less similar to the relativization of the other verb phrases.

For example, *avaṉ eḻutiṉa puttakam* 'the book he wrote' can be derived from the following sentence.

8. avaṉ puttakam eḻutiṉaaṉ 'He wrote a book'
   he book wrote

The transformation can be roughly represented as follows.

III.



NP

avaṉ eḻutiṉa puttakam
'the book he wrote'

The relativized forms of the existential verb iru 'be', viz., *irunta* 'which was', *irukkiRa* 'which is' and *irukkum* 'which is' can replace *uḷḷa* for different tenses. Though *irukkiRa* is equivalent to *uḷḷa*, *uḷḷa* is preferable to denote ownership relation.

The possessor-possessed genitive relation represented by the dative —*ku* (attached to the N denoting the possessor) followed by *uḷḷa* is different from other relations represented by differlnt suffixes and postpositions. For example, one can notice the difference between the Possessive relation represented by the postposition *ku+uḷḷa* and the existential-locative relation represented by the locative elements and *uḷḷa* or *irunta/irukkiRa/irukkum*.

9. a. ceeppil uḷḷa peeṉaa 'the pen in the pocket'
pocket in which was pen

b. ceeppil irunta peeṉaa 'the pen which was in the pocket' pocket in which was pen.

10. a. meejai meel uḷḷa peeṉaa 'the pen which is on the table' table on which is pen

b. meejai meel irunta peeṉaa 'the pen which was on the table' table on which was pen.

Note that *ceeppukuḷḷa peeṉaa* and *meejaikkulla peeṉaa* are not correct. The relation formed by *itam+ulla* (iṭam=place) and *itam+irunta/irukkiRa/irukkum* denotes temporary ownership.

11. avaṉitam uḷḷap peeṉaa 'the pen which is with him' he with which is pen

12. avaṉitam irunta peeṉaa 'the pen which was with him' he with which was pen

Note that the example 14 is sceptable where as 13 is not.

13. *eṉakkuḷḷa peeṉaa avaṉukkulla peeṉaa 'My pen is his pen'
my pen his pen

14. eṉṉitam uḷḷa peeṉaa avaṉukkuḷḷa peeṉaa 'The pen which is with me is his'
I with which is pen his pen

In the case of certain feelings, which can be felt by somebody on some other, the postpositions *ku+ulla* and *iṭam* differentiate the possessor of the feeling from the person on whom the 'feeling' is felt respectively. For example, *avaṉukkuḷḷa koopam* means 'the anger he has' whereas *avaṉitam uḷḷa koopam* means 'the anger that one has (on somebody)'.

The postposition *uriya* derived from the 'be' verb *urittu* 'belong' indicates the relation of a thing on which one has a claim (and need not be actually possessed by him).

15. avaṉukku uriya nilam 'the land which belongs to him' he (dat) which belong land

The following postposed genitive phrases reveal the difference between *uḷḷa* and *uriya*.

16. a. nilam uḷḷavaṉ 'the persons who has land'
    b. *nilam uriyavaṉ
17. a. *nilattiRkuḷḷavaṉ
    b. nilattiRkuriyavaṉ 'the person who has a claim for the land'

The kinship relation can be denoted by the dative *ku* alone It does not allow *uḷḷa* aven optionally.

18. eṉakku makaṉ 'my son'
    I(dat) son

The derivation can be made from the underlying sentence. :

19. eṉakku makaṉ irukkiRaaṉ 'I have a son'
    I (dat) son is

eṉ makaṉ and *eṉṉuṭaiya makaṉ* 'my son' are also possible genitive constructions. In my dialect (vellala) the genitive relation of a sequence of kinship is denoted by the dative *-ku*.

20. eṉakku makaṉukku makaḷukku makaṉ 'my son's daughter's son'
    I (dat) son (dat) daughter (dat) son

The genitive relation of a body and its part is generally unmarked. *avaṉ kai* 'his hand' is preferably used in the spoken language than the other forms, *avaṉukkuḷḷa kai* and *avaṉuṭaiya kai* 'his hand'. Note that 22 is acceptable whereas 21 is not.

21. *anta kai eṉakkuḷḷatu 'That hand is mine'
22. anta peeṉaa eṉakkuḷḷatu 'That pen is mine'
    that pen I (dat) which is that

The relation between certain body and its part is locational than possessive. For example' *talaimuti* 'hair, and *kaiviral* 'finger' can be interpreted as *talaiyil uḷḷa muṭi* the hair on the head' and *kaiyil uḷḷa viral* 'the finger of the hand' and not as *talaikuḷḷa muṭi* and *kaikkuḷḷa viral*. Another interesting difference between the relation of body and its part (inalienable relation) and other possessor-possessed relation (alienable) can be seen from the acceptability of 23. b. and non-accetpability of 24.b.

23. a. eṉ kai muRintu viṭṭatu 'My hand broke'
       my hand broke
    b. eṉakku kai muRintuvittu '(To me the hand broke) My hand broke,'
       I (dat) hand broke
24. a. eṉ peṉsil muRintu viṭṭatu 'My pencil broke'
       my pencil broke
    b. *eṉakku pensil muRintu viṭṭatu '(To me the pencil broke)
       I (dat) pencil broke 'My pencil broke'

In some dialects of Tamil 24.b. is acceptable' Note also the following examples.

25. a. naaṉ avaṉ mutukil aṭitteeṉ 'I hit on his back'
I his back on hit
b. naaṉ avaṉai mutukil aṭitteeṉ ,I hit him on the back'
I he (acc) back on hit

26. a. naaṉavaṉ meejaiyil aṭitteeṉ 'I hit him on table'
I his table on hit
b. *naaṉ avaṉai meejaiyil aṭitteen 'I hit him on the table.
I he (acc) table on hit

The acceptability of 25.b. and a non-acceptability of 26.b. show the difference in the genitives relations. Note also' *eṉakku reṇṭu kaṇ uṇṭu*'I have two eyes'*eṉakku reṇṭu peeṉa uṇṭu*'I have two pens'and *eṉṉitam reṇṭu peeṉaa uṇṭu* 'I have two pens with me' are acceptable whereas *eṉṉitam reṇṭu kaṇ uṇṭu* 'I have two eyes with me' is not acceptable. Kinship and other social relations and characteristics like height' age, weight' etc. also come under this kind of relation.

There are genitively related compounds which are formed as a result of 'object relativization'.

27. paṇamuḷḷavaṉ 'a person who has money'
money which is man

28. aḻakullavaḷ 'a beautiful woman'
beauty which is woman

With gerundaivals' *kuṟulla* means 'for. For example'

29. paṭippataRkuḷḷa puttakam 'the book for reading'
reading(dat) book
which is

30. kuṭippataRkuḷḷa taṇṇiir 'the drinking water'
drinking(dat) which is water

Certain nominal compounds which are genitively related are ambiguous. For example kuḷattu miiṉ can be interpreted as 'the fish in the pond' 'the fish from the pond',etc *pasumpaal* can be interpreted as 'the milk from the cow,'the milk which the cow possesses etc. The ambiguity can be removed by deriving them from different underlying sentences

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COLOPHON

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